

Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922)

Bell was born on March 3, 1847 in Edinburgh. He was educated at the Edinburgh and London Universities. Afterwards he went with his father to Canada and became a teacher in a deaf and dumb school. Later, he became the Professor of Vocal Physiology at the Boston University. In course of a series of experiments to make the speech audible to the deaf, he designed an electrical apparatus which could transmit sound waves electrically through a wire and reproduce them as original. Bell received a patent for his apparatus in 1876.

Bell founded and endowed the American Association to promote teaching of speech to the deaf. Professor Bell is also the inventor of photophone, induction balance and telephone probe for painless detection of bullets.

“Mr Watson, come here please, I want you.” This sentence marked the achievement that changed the face of the world in his lifetime. This sentence was the first to be spoken and received over a telephone.

His photophone is an apparatus for transmitting articulate speech along a beam of light. Bell saw and took advantage of the peculiar properties of selenium for this purpose. His graphophone, which he produced in 1887, was more or less on the same principle as Edison's phonograph, which was an earlier invention and over-shadowed Bell's.

He put forward, in 1912, a plea for 'World English', a universal language based on the phonetics of the English tongue. As a phonetic expert, he knew that the idea was practicable and exceptionally suitable for an international language.

In 1919, he perfected a hydroplane, and in 1922, he produced an apparatus, which he claimed to be invaluable for explorers and travellers through deserts.

Throughout his long life, he poured forth papers and scientific monographs. He was widely recognized as an authority on speech, and his reputation as an inventor always procured him attention. He lived to see the telephone which he invented installed throughout the world, and, linked by wireless, bring the continents within earshot of each other.

He died at Baddeck, Nova Scotia, on August 2, 1922.